



NH OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER

January 2022



Hello from the NH OCA!

As we start a new year, we are resuming our newsletter. We plan to continue to be transparent in our work, share happenings that come our way, and raise awareness for issues we observe. Through this new streamlined format, we will be packing a lot of information in one letter to make updates concise and timely. In this time of uncertainty, the OCA remains committed to keeping a steady eye on the children of NH and to help their voices be heard.

COVID-19

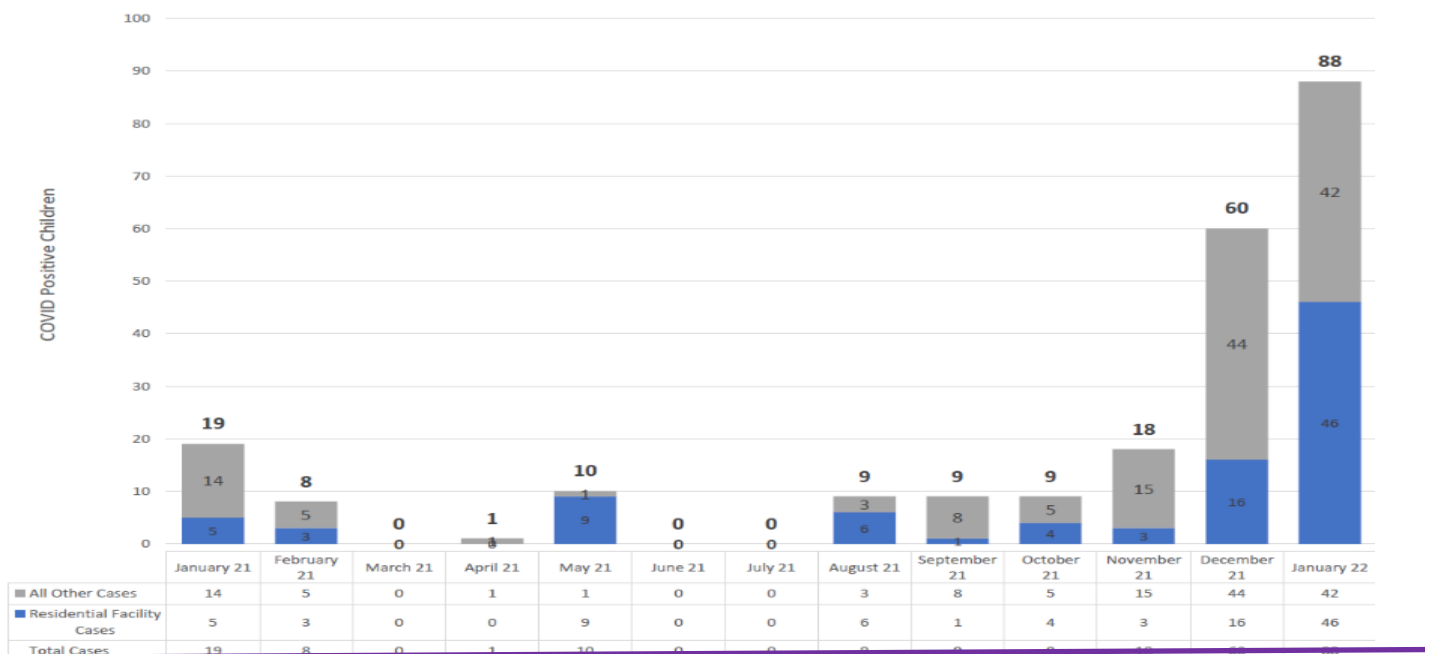


As COVID continues to spread, we have noticed that the children know the best ways to keep themselves and their families safe. They are comfortable masking up, practicing social distancing, and cleaning their hands if you leave hand sanitizer within reach. We recently witnessed a group of children on a school tour seemingly so comfortable in their masks they did not notice they had them on. At one point, one child said to another child who had shaken someone's hand, "You shook hands, you better wash them."



New Hampshire has seen an increase in COVID-19 infections among children and adolescents. This is consistent with national data. However, we have also seen an increase in the numbers of children in residential care testing positive. While visits with family and excursions in the community are limited for them, children in residential programs are still exposed to staff who come and go to the community each day. We are seeing staff in masks on campuses we have visited. We do not know the rate of vaccination among staff, nor do we know how staff protect from viral spread when in the community. Early in the pandemic, public defenders across the country acted to promote the release of children from residential programs as a means of protecting them from viral exposure. There were 341 children in residential care in December 2019. Two years later, in Dec 2021, there is an all-time low 276 children in residential care. Cases of COVID among those children, however are at an all-time high.

DCYF Involved COVID Positive Children Reported to the OCA



Updates



Thank you to the Annie E. Casey Foundation! The NH OCA is supporting the establishment of a Youth Justice Steward program. The program capitalizes on youth expertise in experience to raise awareness, educate about the risks associated with system involvement, inform public policy, and establish a network of support for transformation. The project is the work of a coalition of children currently involved or recently released from the Juvenile Justice system, peer allies, advocacy organizations, legislators, and other interested parties. The program will grant funds to sponsoring organizations to hire a Youth Justice Steward to conduct outreach and education about issues in juvenile justice. In addition to stipends for their time, the Justice Stewards will also participate in training for self-advocacy, important topics and civics. Host organization mentors will also receive training in working with young people through the [One Trusted Adult](#) Program. Other partners in training include NAMI NH, New Futures and the Office of the Child Advocate.



The Youth Justice Steward Program is hiring! The Steering Committee is looking to hire temporary administrative support to get the program up and running. Are you organized and inspired by working with young people? Contact us at childadvocate@childadvocate.nh.gov



The Unite Us (www.UniteUs.com), a coordinated care network of health and social care providers connected through a shared technology platform, in NH network has service providers across the state. At present, there are 161 organizations who are participating. They range from clinical health providers (inclusive of mental health) to community-based social care providers. Although the first year of development was focused on substance use disorder-related services, now, in year two, the attention is turning to support for children and families. Interested to learn more? Here's some information:

- Videos from local network partners as well as some from other networks across the country:
 - [New Hampshire Community Partners: In Their Own Words](#)
 - [A chat with our partners, Corey Gately and Daisy Pierce](#)
 - [Meeting the Moment: Expanding Access to Behavioral Health Care](#)
 - [Meeting Needs Beyond Food Security](#)
 - [Networks Powered by Unite Us Cited as Models of Community-Level SDoH Interventions](#)
- Additional Information about Unite Us:
 - [What is Unite Us?](#)
 - [Taylor Justice: Our vision for statewide networks](#)
 - [Unite Us in NH FAQ](#)



The OCA is hiring! We currently have two positions available. Come work with a dynamic team doing meaningful work. You can make a difference in the lives of children with us.

Child Advocate - Job ID #23347 \$85,514 – \$119,184 Annually.

The role of the Child Advocate is to oversee the Office of the Child Advocate, which is an independent agency, administratively attached to the Department of Administrative Services pursuant to RSA 21-G:10 for administrative purposes only.

Education: A professional graduate degree in law, social work, public health, or a related field.

Experience: Qualified by reason of education, experience, and expertise to perform the duties of the office. The preferred candidate will possess experience analyzing and evaluating human services programs and trends using Safety Science and other evidence-based approaches, with a focus on identifying and implementing best practices on behalf of children and families and demonstrated success in system reform.

Legal Aide – Job ID #44820 \$34,281 - \$47,307 Annually.

The Legal Aide will perform legal duties and diverse research and reporting duties in support of individual cases and review work by researching case records and best practice, associated with achieving the objectives of the Office of the Child Advocate.

Education: Associate degree from a recognized college or university with major study in business administration or political science. Each additional year of approved formal education may be substituted for one year of required work experience.

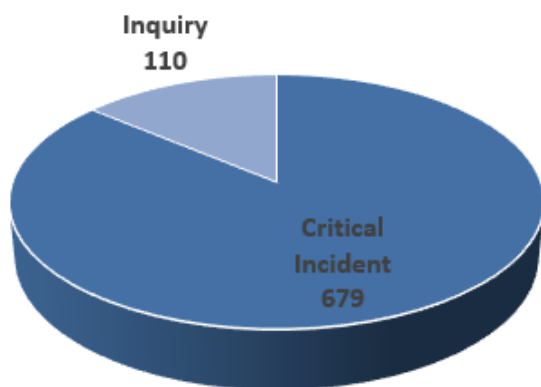
Experience: Two years' experience in a legal office, performing law-related research with one year of experience in administrative support activities. Each additional year of approved work experience may be substituted for one year of required formal education.

If you or anyone you know is interested, visit www.das.nh.gov/jobsearch to see the specifics. We are a small but mighty team with a worthy mission. Join us!

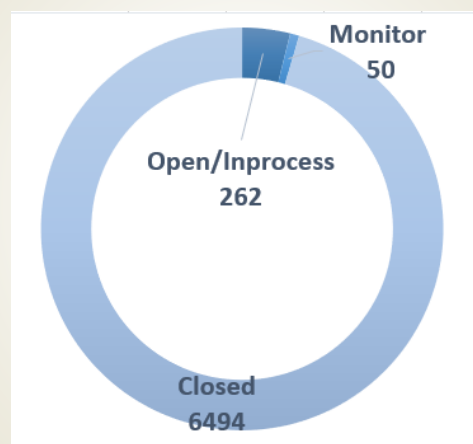
Case Work

- Since the beginning of the 2022 Reporting period (October 1, 2021) the OCA has received 110 inquiries/concerns and been informed of 679 critical incidents.

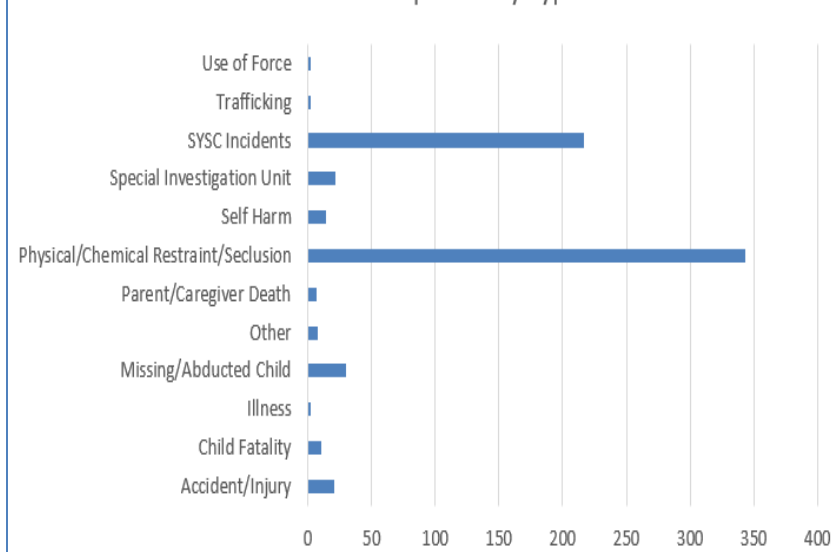
Case Type Breakdown



Since the OCA's inception in 2018:



Incidents Reported by Type



How are people contacting the OCA?

Email	87%
In person	1%
OCA	1%
Phone	9%
Mail	1%
Other	1%

Happenings

- Feb 9 – The Upper Room, a Family Resource Center: Online Workshop: Red Flags in Child Development (ages 3-12) Call Michelle at 603-437-8477 x122
- Feb 12 – Free Panel discussion: Deaf/Hard of Hearing Panel Our Communities: Their Stories, [Register](#)
- Feb 17 – Free webinar: Landing your dream Social Work Job, [Register](#)
- Feb 18 – Oversight Commission on Children's Services meeting
- Mar 25 – The Waypoint Sleep Out 2022, [Register or donate](#)
- Mar 30, Apr 6 & 13 – 4th Annual Children of Incarcerated Parents National Conference [more](#)
- May 4 – Magnify Voices Celebration Event [more](#)
- May 15* – Mental Health Awareness at NH Fisher Cats game
- Jun 4 – July 16 – Magnify Voices exhibit at Jaffrey Civic Center
- Jun 17 – Magnify Voices reception at Jaffrey Civic Center

*Tentative



4th annual Children of Incarcerated Parents National Conference

We are pleased to announce that the **4th Annual Children of Incarcerated Parents National Conference** will take place virtually on March 30th, April 6th, & 13th, 2022.

This year's conference theme will be:

Leading the Future: Young People as Partners for Change

Over the years we have held the national conference, our goals have been built on creating awareness, collaboration, expansion of programming, and advocacy for children of incarcerated parents. This year, we continue these goals with a focus on elevating the voices of children, youth, and families whose lives have been impacted by incarceration.

FOURTH ANNUAL MAGNIFY VOICES EXPRESSIVE ARTS CONTEST 2022

Granite State students grades 5-12 are invited to submit a creative piece about their experience and connections to mental health. Winners will be awarded cash prizes at the celebration event on May 4, 2022, at the Tupelo Music Hall, Derry!

To enter:

- ★ Create a short film, sing a song, or perform a spoken word piece (2 minutes or less)
- ★ Write an essay or poem (1000 words or less)
- ★ Design another medium of expression, such as sculpture, photography, painting, diorama, etc.

ENTRIES DUE: MARCH 4, 2022

www.tinyurl.com/magnifyvoices2022

In collaboration with:



For questions & inquiries, contact MagnifyVoices@gmail.com

...quiet isn't always
peace, and the norms
and notions of what just
is, isn't always justice.

Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

Legislation Watch List

Bill Number	Title
HB 1058	relative to the time allowed for public school students to eat lunch
HB 1131	relative to facial covering policies for schools
HB 1234	relative to criminal background checks for an applicant for a teaching credential
HB 1241	prohibiting a school district from mandating a COVID-19 vaccination for school attendance
HB 1280	prohibiting a parent's refusal to vaccinate a child pursuant to an order of the state or federal
HB1364	establishing a commission to study the creation of an appeals process for childcare violations
HB 1409	relative to the age at which a minor may receive mental health treatment without parental consent
HB 1431 - FN	establishing the parental bill of rights
HB 1465 - FN	relative to the appointment of counsel for juveniles
HB 1507	requiring childcare investigatory findings to be timely published
HB 1513	relative to the definition of a child with a disability for purposes of special education
HB 1515	relative to procedures for guardians ad litem in family court proceedings
HB 1520	relative to procedures for guardians ad litem
HB 1523	establishing a New Hampshire child care fund
HB 1531- FN	modifies the oversight commission on children's services
HB 1568 - FN	raising the age of juvenile delinquency from 18 to 21
HB1578	relative to including certain children and pregnant people in Medicaid and the children's health
HB 1612 - FN	relative to the confidentiality of reports made to the division of children, youth, and families and
HB 1614	requiring the recording and storing of digital video in all state-funded juvenile detention facilities
HB 1623 - FN	relative to cost of living adjustments for foster parents
HB 1633 - FN	relative to requiring COVID-19 vaccination for school attendance
HB 1651 - FN	adding sexual reassignment to the definition of child abuse
SB 70	relative to insurance coverage for emergency behavioral health services for children and young
SB 144 - FN	relative to child care scholarships
SB 288	prohibiting the requiring of COVID-19 vaccinations for schools or child care agencies
SB 326	establishing the office of early childhood
SB 381 - FN -A	establishing an office of the advocate for special education
SB 416	relative to behavioral health assessment and treatment for children in out-of-home placements
SB 430 - FN -A	relative to health and human services
SB 444	relative to childhood adverse experiences treatment and prevention

Follow the process and progress [here](#).




Did you know you can register your position on proposed legislation without having to attend a public hearing in person? Keep your distance and visit the below links to still have your voice heard.

[The New Hampshire State Senate](#)

[The New Hampshire House of Representatives \(state.nh.us\)](#)

Supports and Resources

 [Here](#) are 5 tips child welfare organizations can do to address workplace discrimination.

 NCMEC Videos for Children on Computer Safety (FREE): <https://www.netsmartzkids.org/videos/>



Friends of Aine

Center for Grieving Children and Families

www.friendsofaine.com
www.facebook.com/friendsofaine
603-669-1120
info@friendsofaine.com

 Friends of Aine Center for Grieving Children & Families

Transitional Enhanced Care Coordination




The Transitional Residential (and Psychiatric) Enhanced Care Coordination (TrECC) program represents a **major shift in the norm of residential treatment episodes for youth and their families**. It is designed to **bridge gaps** in knowledge and communication, to **break down barriers to treatment**, and to use **data-driven** practice to provide the most effective but shortest duration of treatment so that youth experience a successful return to their homes and communities.

Target population: children and youth ages 0-21.

Goals of TrECC

TR-ECC will work in conjunction with the youth, family and existing teams (including DCYF if involved) and the residential treatment program by:

- Attending treatment team meetings
- Coordinating and making referrals to supportive community services
- Assisting families with applying for services or Medicaid
- Providing Aftercare or referrals for increased Aftercare Services
- Providing reports and documentation to teams and courts if needed
- Conduct ongoing assessments by utilizing the CANS & Preparedness Tool



NH EASY
GATEWAY TO SERVICES

Did you know?

You can receive text notifications from DHHS to manage your Medicaid, SNAP, Cash, or Child Care benefits!

Go to <https://nheasy.nh.gov/#/signin> to sign up for text notifications.

Post-pandemic benefit changes are coming ...

What You Need to Know



Your SNAP and Medicaid benefits could change when state and federal public health emergencies end. Learn more: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dfa/covid19-changes.htm>

When you move, make sure your Medicaid coverage and any other DHHS benefits moves with you. Update your information through your NH EASY account, or call 1-844-275-3447 (1-844-ASK-DHHS). You can also visit us in-person, or send mail or fax to any [District Office](#).

Check out Collaborative Safety, LLC on YouTube



Scott Modell and Noel Hengelbrok discuss topics that are reinforced in OCA trainings and are great tools for any individuals looking to improve the culture of their agency. To watch and subscribe [click here](#).






eLearn Trainings

Collaborative Safety designed the suite of eLearn trainings to support agencies in establishing and maintaining a culture of safety. These modules also help to provide a common understanding of Safety Science concepts across all levels of an organization.

A few words from the Child Advocate

Happy New Year. 2022 brings with it promise of better things to come and determination to start the “year off right”. I would like nothing more for that to be true for all new parents, regardless of the time of year. “Start off right” when bringing baby home by practicing [safe sleep](#) from night one: baby on back to sleep, on a firm surface, alone, with nothing in the crib/bassinet, every time baby sleeps. Caregivers get exhausted. No one can care for an infant while sleeping. Babies are made to snuggle- when you are fully alert and able to care for them. Family and friends, help new parents by babysitting, doing a little cleaning or taking baby for a walk. Remind caregivers of infants about safe sleep practices. This is a resolution to stick to so that every baby can thrive no matter what time of year they come into the world.

Coming Soon...

-  Office of the Child Advocate 3 Year Strategic Plan
-  New OCA employees
-  A goodbye to New Hampshire's first Child Advocate